



# Waterskin Canteen

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## TOOLS:

- [Needle \(1\)](#)
- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [Sharpie marker \(1\)](#)
- [Super glue \(1\)](#)
- [X-Acto Knife, a.k.a. hobby knife \(1\)](#)



## PARTS:

- [Duct tape \(1\)](#)
- [Thread \(1\)](#)  
*[One spool](#)*
- [Cardboard \(1\)](#)
- [Plastic Ziploc bag \(1\)](#)
- [Empty plastic bottle \(1\)](#)
- [Cork stopper \(1\)](#)
- [Yarn, string, or other cord \(1\)](#)
- [old T-shirt \(1\)](#)

## SUMMARY

Hi, all!

This is my tutorial on how to make your very own waterskin! As a kid, hiking through the Rockies, Appalachia and the Alps, I always loved to carry a waterskin instead of a canteen, mainly because it's easy to handle and not made of rock-hard plastic.

Traditional waterskins were made of cow bladders and coated in resin. Unless you have access to a cow that doesn't need its bladder anymore, I think this might be a little bit easier

to do. I haven't been able to find a DIY tutorial for one of these and thought it would be a great idea to share my design with everyone.

If you have an old T-shirt, towel, or other fabric that you loved, but can't wear/use anymore (like a ripped T-shirt, or old jeans that don't fit), this is a perfect project for you. And I'm betting that everyone has these materials readily available. Let's get started.

### Step 1 — Waterskin Canteen



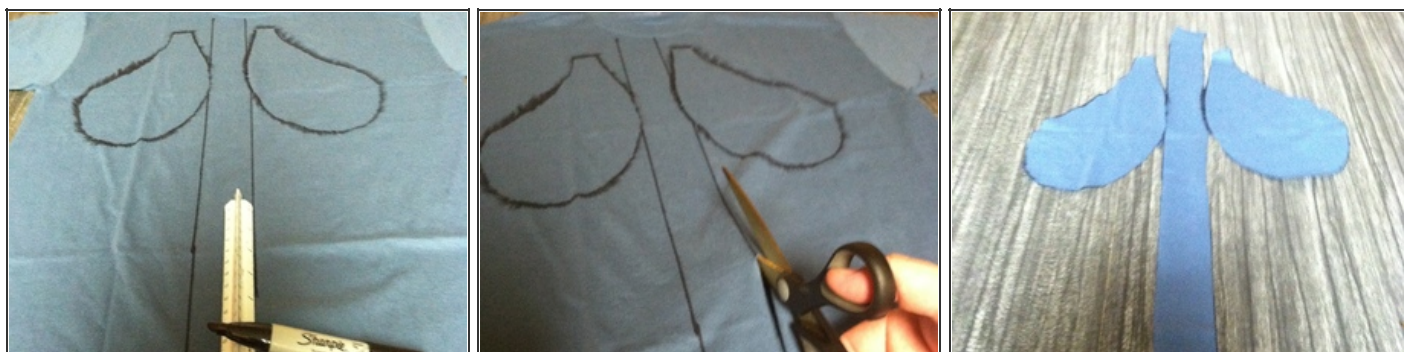
- Using the Sharpie and the cardboard piece, draw a template in the shape you want your waterskin to be. Some people prefer to make it more circular, and others stick to the traditional shape of a waterskin. I've gone with the traditional, as you can see in the photos.
- It doesn't matter if the lines and arcs in the template aren't perfect - once we sew the fabric together, you won't be able to spot any flaws. This template will be used to create the faces of the waterskin, and then we'll discard it.

## Step 2



- Place the template on the left side of the shirt as shown. Do NOT place the template directly in the center of your fabric, or you won't have enough space to cut everything, and we want to sew as little as possible in the next steps.
- Sketch the negative outline on the shirt by repeatedly placing the Sharpie on the template and pulling it off the edge of the template onto the shirt.
- I don't recommend trying to trace around the template, as that will pull and tug the fabric and you won't get a perfect outline.
- Mirror the template along the vertical line of the shirt. Leave at least 2 fingers of space between the outlines!
- Don't worry about the Sharpie getting onto the fabric either - we're going to sew these edges up, and you won't even see any Sharpie marks on the edges.

### Step 3



- Using the Sharpie again, draw two vertical lines from the top to the bottom of the shirt (any straightedge will work; you don't need to use a ruler). Intersect the template outlines for about 3-4 inches, (or roughly 3 fingers-worth in length).
- The reason we intersect the template is because we want this outline to be like an unfolded box, and we'll sew everything together in the next few steps, making it strong enough to carry the water.
- Once done, cut out the waterskin trace as a SINGLE piece. Do NOT cut along the intersection of the vertical lines and the template. See the pictures for a visual explanation.

### Step 4



- Take the empty water bottle, making sure it is dry (you don't want the knife to slip), and cut off the top one-third of the bottle. Keep the top one-third you just cut and discard the rest.



## Step 5



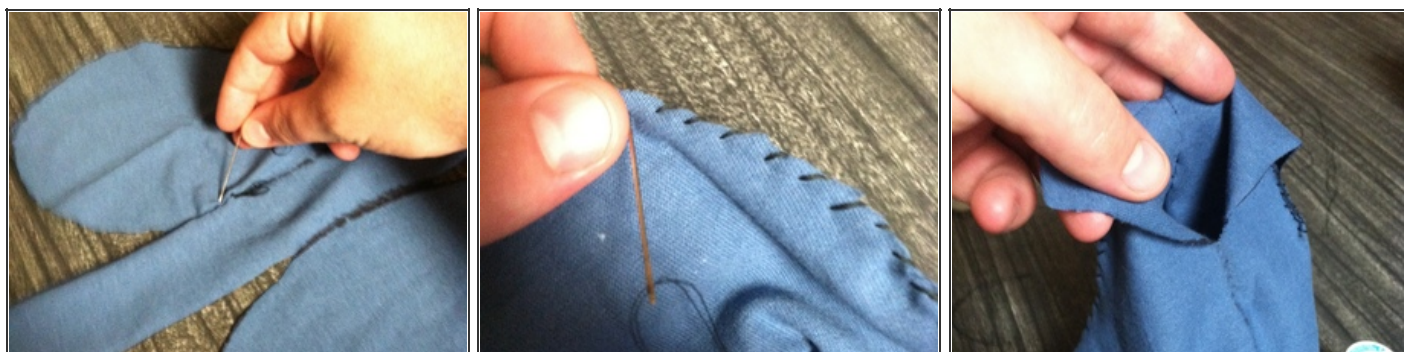
- Next, take the plastic bag and cut the "zipper" part of it off with the scissors, keeping the cut as close to the zipper as possible.
- The way you fold the bag next is very important, so make sure you do it in this fashion (otherwise the bag won't inflate when you pour water into it). Pinch the bag in the middle and raise it to form a hump. Then, while still holding the hump, fold the long edges of the bag toward the hump as well. The folding should resemble an accordion.
- Fold the bag in half again lengthwise, and you're ready to head on to the next step!

## Step 6



- Push the folded bag through the hole in the bottle top. Feed only about 1/4 of the length of the bag through the hole, as we'll need to secure it to the bottle top. Unfold the part you fed through the bottle, and fold it back over the plastic.
- Using about 7-8 inches of duct tape, secure the bag to the bottle. This creates a nicely secured watertight seal for the bag, and gives the unwieldy bag some structure as well.

## Step 7



- Get your thread and needle out, and get ready for some very "practical" stitching. If you don't know how to sew, stitch, or do anything with needles, don't worry - I don't know much either - but it's actually quite easy to get a strong joint between two pieces of fabric with a relatively simple technique!
- Take about four arm-lengths of thread, quadruple up the thread while feeding it through the needle eye, and tie a few knots in the end of the thread to act as stopper when sewing the fabric.
- Position the needle on the inside (the side with the Sharpie marks) of the template, in the lower left corner where the vertical lines and template lines intersect (see picture for details).
- Begin making diagonal loops around the edges of the fabric to stitch them together, with roughly 1/4 inch between loops. Keep going until you're about 1 inch away from the end of sewing these two pieces together. Make a few loops here and tie off the thread.
- Once you've finished the longer edges, stitch ONE of the shorter top sides, but leave the other open. We'll need this space to insert the plastic bag and bottle top.

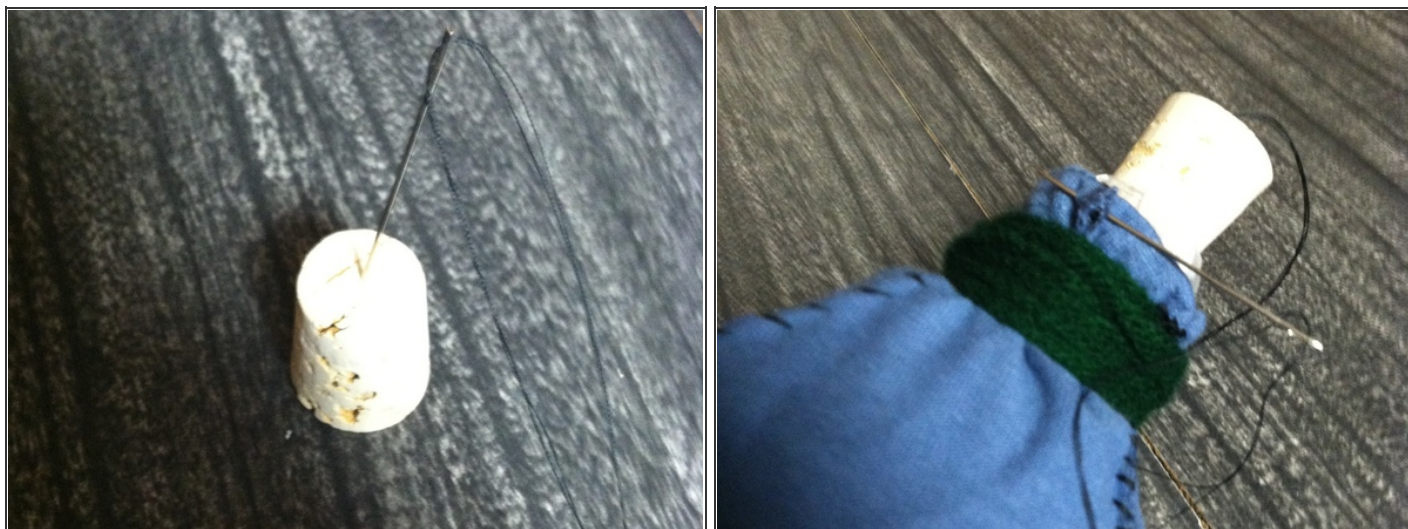
## Step 8



- Take the plastic bag and bottle top and push it through the opening of the bag. If you stitched too far up in the previous section, just undo a few of the stitches and the bag will slide right in.
- You want the bottle top to almost disappear inside the fabric, and the only thing that should be showing is the top of the bottle where the cap was.
- Once it's in, stitch up the last short side with the same technique we used in the previous step.
- Fold over any excess fabric around the top, and wind your yarn around the folded fabric anywhere from 10-25 times, tying it off once done.



## Step 9



- Take your cork stopper and a short piece of thread - about 12 inches quadrupled up will do. Feed it through the needle, make a good sized knot in the end of it, and push the needle through the cork stopper on its vertical axis. We're going to affix the cork stopper to the waterskin using just the thread.
- After you've pushed the needle through the cork, leave about 6 inches of thread and push the needle through the top of the waterskin fabric (above the yarn) to keep the stopper handy. Loop the thread a few times to make a strong joint and tie a knot in it. Cut off any excess thread you might have left.



## Step 10



- That's all, folks! You've made your very own, very handy, and very practical waterskin! Give it a try with other fabrics and graphics to see what you like, but the steps are always the same. The great thing about it is that you can experiment with other shapes too, and now you don't need to spend \$45 buying one from Amazon.
- Please feel free to leave comments, and let me know if you find another step to help improve the idea!
- Check out [my other projects](#) on Instructables,
- Or follow my blog at [DoG studios!](#)

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